

# North Carolina Quarter Takes Flight

March 12, 2001

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## *Newest coin released under U.S. Mint 50 State Quarters™ Program honors Wright Brothers' first flight*

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Raleigh, NC, March 12, 2001 — Nearly a century after the first successful flight took place in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the Wright Brothers' famous "Flyer" takes flight once again. This time, however, the flight takes place on the newest quarter released under the United States Mint 50 State Quarters™ Program. During a special ceremony this morning, U.S. Mint Director Jay W. Johnson joins Governor Michael F. Easley to introduce the 12th coin launched under the successful program. Not surprisingly, the coin celebrates North Carolina's significant achievement in aviation.

The coin's design is a rendition of the famous 1903 photograph, "First Flight," and features the "Flyer" piloted by Orville Wright as Wilbur Wright watches in the foreground. It is an apt commemoration of the Wright Brothers' remarkable launch of the first heavier-than-air, self-propelled flying machine.

"On behalf of the State of North Carolina I want to commend the U.S. Mint for the commemorative quarters program," said Gov. Easley. "It is an opportunity to share a bit of North Carolina history with the rest of the nation."

"As the North Carolina quarter enters circulation, it becomes the twelfth coin in the 50 State Quarters Program to celebrate our country's unique and diverse history," said Mint Director Johnson. "The Wright Brothers' "Flyer," like the Statue of Liberty, Georgia Peach and Massachusetts Minuteman has become one of the premier symbols of national heritage to be featured on coinage."

The celebration, taking place at the North Carolina Museum of History, coincides with the opening of a new exhibit featuring several original Wright Brothers' artifacts. Event hosts include the Governor's office, the U.S. Mint and the First Flight Centennial Commission.

During the ceremony, fifth grade students from North Ridge Elementary School in Raleigh were among the first to receive the new quarters from the Governor, and will later participate in a special kite fly in the Capital Corridor. Earlier in the year, the students' teacher, Virginia Byrne, was named "Teacher of the Year," by the First Flight Centennial Commission for incorporating aviation and North Carolina history into her curriculum and lesson plans.

The release of the North Carolina quarter marks the end of production of the New York quarter, which was released in January 2001. Each new quarter is minted for about 10 weeks, after which it is no longer produced. The new quarters are manufactured at both the Philadelphia and Denver Mints. Together, they produce all legal tender U.S. circulating coins before being shipped to the Federal Reserve for distribution through the banking system. The Federal Reserve orders new quarters to ensure an adequate supply to meet the needs of commerce as commercial banks demand. Although North Carolina quarters will first be released to the Federal Reserve on March 12, 2001, it may take several weeks or more before the new coins are distributed throughout the Federal Reserve System to commercial banks.

U.S. Mint research shows that well over 125 million Americans are collecting the 50 State Quarters. The 50 State Quarters products such as pristine proof sets, educational maps and unique jewelry are adding to the collecting fun. These products and more information about the 50 State Quarters Program are available through the U.S. Mint's Web site at [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov) or by calling 1-800-USA MINT.

The First Flight Centennial Commission is the North Carolina agency responsible for the state's commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' first flight in 2003. Through programs in public awareness and educational outreach, as well as special events with national and international partners, the Commission is planning a yearlong, statewide celebration of North Carolina's role in the first flight and the evolution of aviation into the 21st century. For more information, visit their Web site at [www.firstflightnc.com](http://www.firstflightnc.com).

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